Making Better Use of Data
Reducing the Burden on Parents, Teachers, Schools and Districts

*"I want parents, educators, and policymakers to have the quality data they need, when they need it, to make the decisions necessary to improve student achievement." –
Superintendent Jack O'Connell*

Importance of Data
Collecting and interpreting valid data about our students, teachers, schools and education programs is critically important to improving instruction and helping students to meet higher expectations.

The Problem
Over the years, state and federal legislation and regulations have required collection of data about student demographics, achievement, program enrollment, school and teacher characteristics, and more. Data has been collected and reported using different terminology for the same information, and often the same information is requested on different forms for different purposes. Data reported to parents -- about their children's achievement and standards for what students are expected to learn – is also often confusing.

"Districts should not have to report the same things in different ways to different programs in the Department. Really, this is the kind of bureaucratic overkill schools and the public rightly despise." – Superintendent Jack O'Connell

Solutions
One of Superintendent O'Connell's top three priorities is to eliminate redundant and unnecessary data collections, while collecting necessary data more efficiently and making better use of the data that is collected. This will reduce the burden on schools, allowing time spent on paperwork to be focused on students. He also wants parents to have access to data about student test scores and California's academic content standards that is more useful and easier to understand. To accomplish these goals, the Superintendent is calling for:

- ■ **By July 1, elimination of all unnecessary data collections.**

- ■ **Creation of a data clearinghouse ("dictionary") to standardize all data collections**

- ■ **No redundant data collections created by the CDE**

- ■ **Embargo by the Legislature on any unnecessary data requests**

- ■ **Simplified, more useful reports to parents on student progress in California's rigorous standards.**

- ■ **By June 2005, all students to have an individual, privacy-protected identifier**

- **More state support of local districts' data management systems**

- **Completion of a statewide education data superhighway (CSIS) within 5 years.**